

Cambridgeshire Traction Engines Scrapbook 1897 to 1990

Facts, Features and (occasional) Fallacies
reported in Cambridge Newspapers

summarised by

Mike Petty

Most of these stories originally appeared in the Cambridge Daily/Evening/News or the
Cambridgeshire Weekly News, its sister title.

They are supplemented by some articles published in the
Cambridge Independent Press or Cambridge Chronicle

Most were featured in my 'Looking Back' column in the Cambridge News from 1996-2014

The complete 'Cambridgeshire Scrapbook' of which this is a small section is published online
at bit.ly/CambsCollection

I have digital and other copies of most of the stories summarised.
I hope to publish these online one day. If you would like them in the meantime then please get
in touch.

The original volumes are housed in the Cambridgeshire Collection at Cambridge Central
Library where there are many other indexes dating back to 1770.

They also have detailed newspaper cuttings files on over 750 topics that have been compiled
since the 1960s.

Newspapers sometimes get things wrong. I copy things out incorrectly. Do check

There are a multitude of spelling and layout errors. Please forgive or correct them

News never stops but this file was finished on 31 August 2016.

I will maintain supplements and corrections – contact me for anything you need

Please make what use of these notes that you may. Kindly remember where they came from

See my website – www.mikepetty.org.uk for further notes.

Mike Petty, Stretham

2017

1898 04 10 c

On Wednesday afternoon a servant at Mrs Emma Hagger's farm at Kingston, saw that the roof of the barn was well alight and at once gave the alarm. Ready help was given, but the farm buildings and almost everything but the livestock was lost. It is supposed that the outbreak was caused by a spark from a passing traction engine upon the dry roof of the barn. Such an engine passed about five minutes before the alarm was given

1898 06 18 c

A few evenings ago a young cyclist well known in Broad Street, Ely, was "scorching" along the Stretham Road. It was nearly dark, and he saw in the distance what appeared to him two bicycles outbreast, with lights shining brightly. Being adept on the cycle, he thought he would shoot between them, when much to his surprise, and before he could stop his "horse", he found he had collided with a traction engine, much to the damage of the bike.

1898 10 28 c

A Stretham agricultural labourer met his death at land each by having the life literally crushed out of him by the wheel of a traction engine. He fell from the steersman's man's step over the side of the engine, and the enormous wheel passed over his body, death being almost instantaneous. The foreman and traction engine driver said he was engaged in putting a piece of coal on fire and when he lifted his head he saw the deceased man's legs go over the top of the wheel. The boy who was walking in front of the engine at the time of the accident, said his attention was first attracted by the engine stopping. He looked back and saw the deceased lying on the ground, the wheel having passed over him. The roads were smooth at that spot

1898 11 25 c

There was an exceptionally sat occurrence on Fore Hill, Ely. A traction engine, drawing two trucks and with a portable engine in the rear, made the descent of the Hill. This proved so difficult that the attention of a considerable number of onlookers was arrested. The driver appeared unable powerless to control either the speed of the machine or the erratic course taken by the trucks. The engine at the rear careered from one side to the other. Two youths took refuge in the passage leading to the Conservative club. They remained there until the engine had passed, but did not notice the engine in the rear, and as they came out of the passage one of its wheels came in contact with the pavement near them and broke off. One boy received such serious injuries that last night he died

1899 05 12 c

A traction engine has an irresistible attraction for children, who go as near as they dare to inspect the mechanism by which it is driven. Some children were playing on the Cherry Hinton road when an engine, drum, and elevator passed by. One of them, Emily Jaggard, nine years of age, ventured too near and was knocked down by the elevator, the wheel of which passed over her foot. The girl was at once conveyed to hospital where it was found that the left ankle was fractured and the right ankle severely bruised

1899 10 08 c

Richard Drake, machinist from Sutton, was summoned for permitting a locomotive to be used on the highway drawing more than three loaded wagons. P.S. Hodge said he saw a traction engine in Churchgate street, Soham drawing three wagons, a house van and a chaff cutter. The driver said that his master had expected they would be stopped. Fined 30s.

1900 07 13 c

Ely U.D.C. heard that a traction engine belonging to Mr T.H. Summerlee of Littleport, having got beyond the control of the driver, ran down Back Hill, coming into contact with the kerb in front of the old cottages and overturning on the roadway. The chairman thought that if it were possible to make regulations with regard to traction engines they ought to do so. They might

cause serious accidents, as anyone coming up the hill with a big load could not turn round and get away from a runaway engine.

1900 09 25 c

There was no one to blame for the accident whereby a farm labourer met his death at Quy this week. The man was sitting on a horse's back; it took fright at the sight of a traction engine and he was thrown from it. The noteworthy thing is that this farm labourer was 77 years of age. It is all to the honour of the man that he kept on doing his farm labourer's work rather than become a burden upon others. But the social conditions under which men of nearly 80 are made to work in the road and the field are not ideal.

1901 06 20 c

Godmanchester town council are making a claim against Mrs Hooley for special damage to their roads caused by the use of traction engines with heavy waggons attached between Godmanchester station and Papworth. Mr Hooley said he had spent £15,000 in building materials for his place at Papworth but nothing had been carted which could be considered extraordinary traffic. He would not pay a penny piece until he was made to

1901 09 06 c

A fatality occurred to a man engaged with a traction engine drawing two loads of stone in the direction of Hookhams, Radwinter. They were descending a hill near the Plough Inn and the deceased was applying the brakes to the foremost waggon when one of the wheels of the rear truck caught the heel of his boot, throwing him to the ground and he was run over by the load of stones. The body was removed to the Red Lion Inn to await the inquest

1901 09 20 c

At Huntingdon County Court Godmanchester Council sued the wife of Mr Ernest Terah Hooley, of Papworth Hall for £187 19s. 8d for repairs to a highway caused by excessive traffic. She had a traction engine drawing two trucks which constantly travelled over the road conveying agricultural produce, building materials and road material. This traffic began in 1900 & over 1,000 tons of material had been conveyed. Mr Hooley said he would take care that the engines were not sent on the roads in bad weather another year. During lunch an arrangement was arrived at between the parties; the terms were not mentioned.

1902 04 25 c

In the course of works at Grantchester Mill in connection with providing a turbine it had been noticed that the brickwork to the retaining wall which supported the public road was getting somewhat out of repair. The arch over the waterway appeared inadequate to bear any but the ordinary traffic and there was considerable risk if traction engines were allowed to pass. The tenant of the mill had put up a notice that the bridge was unfit for heavy vehicles. The bridge was a private one, although the Council had to make up the roads on either side and the matter was referred to the Highways Committee.

1902 07 31 c

The people of Old Cherry Hinton participated in festivities in celebration of the Coronation. They took the form of sports and a tea, besides various minor amusements, while music entered largely into the scheme of pleasure. 900 people availed themselves of the opportunity to take tea which took place in a large erection constructed of canvas under trees in a meadow. Beside this temporary tea-room stood a traction engine with steam up but it was not attached to any bread-cutting arrangement such as might have been necessary to cope with the extraordinary demand. It was used to boil water for the tea.

1903 02 14 c

Mr Balding told Royston council of the dangerous state of the Royston Cave in Melbourn Street owing to the heavy traffic which is constantly passing over it. The apex of the cave was close to the traffic and there was a possibility of its giving way at any time, especially if a traction engine were passing over. Serious consequences might arise and it was a danger the council should consider at their earliest convenience. But the road is under the supervision of the County Council.

1903 04 22 c

A serious fire occurred at the village of Barton by which almost the whole of the Manor Farm, with the exception of the house, was razed to the ground. It is supposed the drum of a traction engine after working for a considerable time, got very hot and some corn which was standing near by caught alight. A cart with horse attached was close by and the horse was taken out only just in time, being slightly singed. The cart was consumed by the flames. The men worked assiduously with buckets and water but their efforts were without avail and soon all the farm buildings were blazing.

1904 06 29 c

A terrible fatality occurred on a farm at Catley Park, Linton where a steam cultivator of Messrs Pamplin Bros of Cherry Hinton was at work pulling in a field. There was a large steam traction engine at each end of the field and the great boiler of one of them suddenly burst without the slightest warning with portions of the engine sent flying in all directions. The driver was caught by a piece of iron about the breast but is not seriously injured. A water cart was standing near under the charge of a farm workman who was struck on the head and killed on the spot. Portions of debris were found more than 200 hundreds yards away. The thick iron boiler was broken and twisted into all shapes and little of the engine was left intact.

1904 06 30 c

A series of picture postcards showing the results of the fatal explosion of the traction engine at Linton has been issued by Mr S.F. Talbot. They illustrate the terrible force of the explosion. The heavy engine was torn in sunder as if it had been paper and huge pieces of metal were thrown many yards. Looking at the photographs of the wreck one can only marvel how the driver escaped with his life – it was the driver of a water cart that was killed.

1904 07 06 c

The inquiry into the Linton traction engine boiler explosion heard from Elijah Pamplin the proprietor of the Cherry Hinton firm. They had purchased the engine in 1895 from the Oxford Steam Plough Company and it was not new then. It had been thoroughly overhauled and was repaired each winter. He had inspected the inside of the boiler himself and no new plates were needed. It was doing ordinary work and the steam gauges had indicated 120 lbs pressure. The bracket which supported the winding drum had been torn away from the boiler but he could not say whether it had burst at this place. The firm had done everything possible to prevent danger or injury. The jury reached a verdict of accidental death. A formal Board of Trade investigation will be held.

1904 12 22 c

At Balsham police searched in vain for horses to pull the Macedonian gypsies' caravan and hit upon the expedient of pressing a traction engine into service. So the motley crowd with their caravans and tiny ponies proceeded on their weary way. The idea of being drawn along by a traction engine greatly delighted the wanderers who crowded into their caravans and very contentedly made the journey into Newmarket where they camped for the night on the Heath. The police accompanied the party as far as the Red Lodge where the Suffolk authorities continued with the procession, their intention being to dump the vans on land at Brandon in Norfolk.

1906 01 19

The Ely surveyor said he had examined the Prickwillow Road and found that for 140 chains between the Norwich gates and the Old Bank the road was badly cut up. For some months there had been exceptionally heavy traffic caused by Messrs R. Drake of Sutton's traction engines and wagons who had been making three or four journeys a week carting agricultural produce. 06 01 19

1906 06 04

An inquest was held into the sad circumstances of the death of Police Inspector Sampson of Bottisham whose leg was crushed beneath a traction engine after a fall from a bicycle. He was free-wheeling down Allington Hill when he encountered Messrs Sturton's traction engine going down the centre of the road. His bicycle wobbled, he swerved and fell off under the wheels 06 06 04a

1906 07 09

The Chief Constable reported the death of Inspector Sampson who had been in the force for 40 years. He was returning on his bicycle from duty at Newmarket when he collided with a traction engine and died in hospital. He hoped the committee would grant a pension to the man's widow. However it was doubtful whether he was still in the execution of his duty – he was returning home for his personal convenience. The auditor might question the payment and they should take counsel's opinion. But they granted a gratuity of £300. 06 07 09 & a

1908 02 17

Bottisham traction engine without lights – 08 02 17a

1908 03 10

Stapleford child run over by Pamplin traction engine – 08 03 10a

1908 03 24

Coveney farmer accident Drake of Sutton traction engine – 08 03 24a & b

1909 10 25

A few playful little sparks from a passing traction engine ignited thatched roofs and caused a big fire at Hauxton. The Leather Gaiters public house together with two large barns and various stacks were destroyed and animals roasted alive. The engine was drawing several waggon loads of the University Officers Training Corps who were engaged in a sham fight in the neighbourhood. CDN 09 10 25

1910 04 22

A motorist told the court he was driving near Therfield when he saw a traction engine ahead of him going in the same direction. When he came up he sounded his hooter but it was no use as the trucks which the engine was drawing made such a noise. There was no one on the lookout so he had to stay behind the engine until he came to the Thrift where the engine stopped. The publican of the Horse and Groom and Sarah Ann Andrews both stated the motor could not pass as the engine was in the middle of the road. There were only two men with it and they were both riding. They were convicted of a breach of the Locomotives on Highway Act. 10 04 22c

1910 09 20

With the development of light motor traction the demands on highways is increasing. But they leave much to be desired. Many roads have only a small width in the middle that is pleasant for motorists to drive on, with the sides used for passing. But this is obstructed by covered carts and vans, the heavy two-horsed brewer's dray and especially traction engines with two or three wagons attached. The Highways Act states that if the driver of any wagon, cart or carriage shall not keep on the left side of the road he shall be guilty of obstruction and

may be fined £5. The authorities should enforce this provision which at present is more honoured in the breach than the observance 10 09 23

1910 09 27

Swavesey people have reason to complain of the carelessness displayed by the men in charge of the traction engine and three huge trucks used to convey granite from the station for use on the county council roads. On several occasions the main road has been strewn with granite dropped from the trucks. The engine with its heavy train shakes the houses in an alarming way. When they come through after nine in the evening babies and early bed-goers have been roused from their sleep and the domestic peace disturbed. Horse and carts did not damage the roads like the engine does and gave employment to local men. 10 09 23f

1910 11 18

On Saturday evening a traction engine belonging to Messrs Pamplin of Cherry Hinton was passing through Boxworth with two trucks of coal. When near the Brickyard Gate the plug was blown out, causing a stoppage of several hours near Soldier's Drove. Horses and a water cart had to be fetched from Elsworth to re-fill the engine and it was not until 11pm that a fresh start could be made. It returned at three in the morning. 10 11 18d

1911 07 14

No outing has ever been more enjoyed by the 152 people from Histon who attended the Croxton Park Garden Party. The sight on the St Neots Road will not be forgotten for many years. The road was one continuous stream of char-a-bancs, brakes, 'buses, waggonettes, farm wagons, traps, landaus, taxis and motors. Even a traction engine was bravely wending its way drawing behind it three gaily-decorated farm wagons all heavily laden with a merry party 11 07 14e

1911 07 28

A traction engine belonging to Charles Thurston, drawing three show vans was instrumental in setting fire to hedges in three places when passing along the Huntingdon Road near Boxworth. A spark from the engine set a hedge alight near the King William IV Inn, one around Mr Topper's grass field and another belonging to the New Inn where about 100 yards were completely destroyed. The landlord, Charles Poulter and two men grappled energetically with this outburst and P.C. Richardson of Boxworth, who was superintending sheep dipping at Manor Farm Swavesey was promptly on the spot 11 07 28i

1911 08 11

A new attraction at the Cambridge Mammoth Show was one of Mr Spencer's captive balloons. Attached by a steel hawser to a powerful traction engine, it made a number of ascents giving passengers a magnificent view. The display culminated with a thrilling parachute descent from 1,600 feet by the famous aeronaut Captain Spencer. He dropped like a stone, then the parachute spread out and he floated down near Jesus College grounds. The balloon, freed from his weight sprang upwards, the sun glistening on its yellow casing before descending at Exning where it was the object of a great deal of attention from a large crowd 11 08 11 & a

1911 12 08

The large building known as Porter's Barn has been pulled down at Over and the appearance of Overcote Road has entirely changed. After the boards had been knocked off the sides and the thatch removed from the roof strong chains were fastened to the centre supports, binding them securely together. To these was attached the wire rope of a traction engine. When all was in readiness a few mighty 'puffs' from the engine brought the whole structure crashing to the ground. Villa residences will be erected upon the site 11 12 08c

1912 05 31

The County Council sued Messrs Pepper and Hollis, gravel pit proprietors of Cambridge and Lt Abington for damage caused to the public highway by their heavy traction engines and trucks loaded with gravel. They had hauled 1,000 tons of gravel on the road from Abington to Pampisford, cutting it up. But Linton Council's steam tractor also used it, as did Pamplin's engines, commercial motors from Chaplin of Fulbourn, Christmas of Haverhill and Hudsons from Pampisford. 12 05 31

1912 06 21

Police Inspector Chevill testified that he saw a traction engine drawing three empty wagons travelling at a fast rate and got on his bike to follow. The driver went through Caxton village at about ten miles an hour – the limit was two mph. When he stopped at the bridge to take on water the driver said he'd put the brakes on when going down the hill but they were a bit greasy. If there had been anybody in the way they must have been run over. There had been several narrow escapes from accidents in the village through the defendant's negligent driving. He was fined twenty five shillings. 12 06 21b

1912 06 28

Damage to road caused by traction engine – 12 06 28d

1912 11 25

Trinity College farm fire caused by Pamplins traction engine driving threshing machine 12 11 15f

1914 05 22

The Wheel Came Off. — On Monday last, as one of Mr. Godfrey's trucks loaded with granite was being drawn by a traction engine up the causeway (Dry Drayton) one of the wheels came off, causing the whole to topple over. Fortunately no one was near at the time.

1918 05 29

Women's Land Army demonstration – 200 parade with motor tractor and traction engine; demonstration of hay bailing on Parker's Piece; need for more labour – 18 05 29b, c

1919 10 15

Scenes during railway strike – lorries, traction engine, milk churn in motorcycle sidecar – photos – 19 10 15c

1920 07 23

Boy crushed by traction engine at Littleport

1920 12 29

Disabled ex-servicemen employment, 18 men being trained in tailoring, 12 each in jewellery, clock repairing and carpentry, 40 in diamond-cutting; photos in English Leather Co boot repairs and man driving traction engine – 20 12 29a

1923 05 11 c

Sir - Traction engines do no damage to roads which are probably made, not even to tarred roads if the proper amount of granite chips are laid down, and not a soft and useless mixture of tar and sand, which is picked up at once it horses and other slow traffic. If the roads are marked, it is because they are not properly finished. I fail to see that because these motors may come from distant places they do us no good. Where would Cambridge be if it were not in touch by transport with distant places? We should go short of many necessities, in fact, everything except for two important local products, knowledge and sausages - very good

things in their way, but would not alone carry us far. We must make the roads bear the traffic; that is what they are for. - "Another Ratepayer"

1923 05 14 c

John Manning of Bedford was summoned for using a locomotives on the highway to draw more than three loaded wagons. Superintendent Allen spoke to seeing a traction engine at Barton drawing four loaded wagons. Three wagons were loaded with tackle belonging to roundabouts, and the fourth wagon, bore the words "Water cart". There were five wooden tubs in it, three of which contained coal. Witness told defendant he was only allowed to draw three wagons and a water cart. He said the last was a water cart. Witness asking where the water was, but he could not show it. There was no water in the wagons for engine purposes. Defendant admitted putting coal on the wagon. He could not carry enough in his bunker for the journey. He was fined 10s.

1923 08 16 c

Cambridge county court heard an action for damage to a private road at Caxton Common farm. 5-600 sacks of Barley were moved by a traction engine and truck, the engine weighing eight or ten tons and the truck some three tons. The result was that the road was cut up so that it was impossible to use it for traffic of any description. The ruts made by the engine were so deep that the wheels of the trucks did not revolve and it slithered along on the axles. The road was not now usable even for horse traffic.

1923 08 25 c

A huge boiler, mounted on a trolley, and towed by two heavy traction engines, sank into the roadway at the corner of Thompson's Lane, Cambridge, at about a quarter to twelve this morning. It appears that the boiler was being conveyed to the Electric Light Company's works in Richmond Terrace, when the road collapsed under the strain. The boiler is about 30 tons in weight, and was many feet in length, and it is estimated that together the boiler and trolley weigh 40 tons. After several hours work the boiler was extricated.

1924 05 30 c

Sir - it is only quite recently some considerable amount of public money was spent for labour and material on Milton Road, Cambridge, and today the passage of a traction engine or heavy vehicle of some kind has simply torn the road up, and the expenditure is to all intents and purposes rendered useless. Surely the authorities whose duty it is to control the highways should take some drastic steps to stop this sort of thing happening – A.H.Reed, Cambridge

1924 07 01 c

As one of Thurston's traction engines was nearing Fenstanton the middle of the three trolleys it was drawing was noticed to be on fire. The flames quickly spread and the organ of the motor scenic railway, was soon well alight. As no water could be procured sand from the gravel pits was thrown over the fire but the flames proved too strong and the whole organ and the trolley upon which it was mounted completely collapsed. It is suggested the outbreak was due to a spark from the engine which found its way through the protecting wire gauze on top of the chimney.

1925 07 09 c

A traction engine driver was fined for assaulting Octavia Bocock, farmer and a well-known cricketer of Ashley. He had seen the man with his traction engine on the road near his pond where it had stopped to take water. He had no right to do so without permission. The driver said he had permission from the foreman to take two or three pails of water as he could get plenty of clean water at Lydgate. Bocock said he would stand in front of the engine until he paid him 5s. but the driver drove on.

1928 04 23 c

One of a block of five cottages at Saxon Street caught fire. The fire originated in the thatched roof of two cottages occupied by Alfred Foreman and his family of five persons. The adjacent cottages were occupied by Mr Elliott and family of four, Mr Edwards and family of two and Mr Allard and family of four. The Newmarket District Fire Brigade was called out and in spite of the difficulty of the time – all the firemen were at dinner – and the difficulty in getting a motor to take the engine, the response was commendably prompt. In spite of the high wind they were able to save entirely two of the cottages but the others were completely burnt out. Shortly before the fire a traction engine passed along the road & a spark from this may have caused the fire.

1928 08 06 c

A thirty-ton stack on the farm of Mr R. Mailer at Boxworth caused considerably anxiety when it caught fire. It stood in close proximity to a number of others and to the buildings of what is one of the largest farms in the neighbourhood. The whole stack had to be dragged to pieces with steel hawsers and traction engines before the fire could be effectively dealt with. The firemen arrived about 4 am and did not return to Cambridge until 7.35 pm. To add to their discomfort heavy rain began to fall shortly after they arrived and continued throughout the greater part of the day

1930 06 09

A disastrous fire broke out at West Wrattling in which four old cottages, recently converted into one, were completely destroyed. One was the old post office and they formed a pleasant group of picturesque thatched buildings. A spark from a passing traction engine is believed to have ignited the roof. Mrs Barker, a bedridden lady of over 90 years lay helpless in one cottage and was removed to safer quarters by volunteers. 30 06 09

1931 05 08

Midsummer Fair is to be held this year on Stourbridge Common; money had been spent reseeding Midsummer Common and would be wasted if heavy traction engines and other fair equipment were allowed on it. The fair was getting bigger and bigger with complaints about the noise and it is extremely unlikely it will ever return there. But showmen objected; the music could be reduced but most of the noise came from the 'Walls of Death' which ought to be banned. 31 05 08 g-I

1931 10 02

It is easier to kill a man than to kill a custom so every year on Sept 25th the Mayor, Town Clerk, Bailiffs and Town Crier form a solemn procession which proceeds to Stourbridge Common to open the Fair. But this year not even schoolchildren were there to greet them and a News reporter was the sole representative of the public until a solitary figure strolled up. There were no roundabouts, swings or stalls, not even the traction engine that last year was the final relic of a dying fair, puffed and snorted in welcome. 31 10 02d

1931 10 02

Traction engine crash Bourn – photo – 31 10 02r # c.26.48

1941 11 24

"Freeing the Traction Engine".— According to a Waterbeach-born correspondent (says Watchman) today is the 45th anniversary of the repeal of what people were pleased to call the old Red Flag Act. It was on November 14 1896, that traction engines, then largely used for agricultural work, were first allowed on the public roads without a man walking some yards in front and carrying a red flag to warn people of the coming of mechanical transport. Steam engines, used for driving roundabouts and for drawing showmen's vans, were in the same category as traction engines used by farmers, and the man with a red flag was a familiar

figure on country roads. It was about eighty years ago that the first steam roundabout appeared at one of the Cambridge fairs, and it is said to have been invented by an engineer James Savage, who lived at King's Lynn.

1954 04 01 c

Bolton Brothers' steam traction engine was the first steam-driven road vehicle to make its appearance in Cambridge. It was in 1902 that the enterprising Boltons decided that more power was required in furniture removals than could reasonably be expected even from two fine horses and that on a long run the traction engine was then peerless. Bolton's business of removal contractors and furniture depository has now been acquired by the Cambridge Co-operative Society and will be carried on with the same care and enterprise that has typified its activities for more than 50 years.

1961 05 05

Robert Pumphrey of Temple Farm, Duxford has the only two original traction engines in the country in working order. They were used for harvesting until 1951 but were too expensive to run and were abandoned. Instead of breaking them up he started entering them in rallies and has won a variety of prizes. He drives the engines to shows, averaging 35 miles a day on a good day. They consume large quantities of fuel so he carries at least 4 cwt with him on his journeys. 61 05 05

1974 12 24 c

It took them most of yesterday to get Lord Lascalles out of a ditch at Gt Chesterford. They used heavy recovery cranes, a lot of sweat and a word or two that you wouldn't hear at midnight mass. His Lordship, a 20-ton traction engine slithered down the side of the bank on his way to a charity do at Ickleton. Uttlesford district councillor, Mr Stephen Neville, was behind the wheel when the accident happened. The engine has raised over £400 for charity this year.

1976 09 19 c

The Mayor of Saffron Walden criticised the town's magistrates when they stopped him playing a fairground organ because the noise was interrupting a case. Coun Stephen Neville planned to play the organ in the Market Square as a prelude to his ball at the town hall. He had set up two traction engines as well as the organ to entertain homegoing schoolchildren. "We got at least 500 schoolchildren down here and then we were stopped", he said. "The magistrates could have held the case in the back court".

1977 04 15 c

There may be treasure at the bottom of the garden at the Red House pub in Longstowe. Or on the other hand there may well not be. The landlord, Mr Rex Ford, is finding out – with the help of a team of expert divers. They spent six hours in the icy water but didn't reach the bottom after 90 feet & were forced to abandon the hunt having reached the limit of their decompression exposure time. They did find a large antique key on a ledge. George Hughes, aged 70, remembers drawing water from the well when a boy to power steam traction engines. "That is one of the deepest wells hereabouts and is reckoned to be over 300 years old", he said.

1981 11 26

The new owner of the Croxton estate is anxious to see the whole village rejuvenated and the Old Manor House converted to a pub. He also hopes to attract caravan and traction engine rallies to raise money to preserve the Hall which has been in his family for more than 160 years. It needs major repairs: many of the rooms have a problem with damp and recently part of the ceiling in the dining room collapsed. 81 11 26a

1985 10 14a

Longstanton traction engine museum – 85 10 14a